

# THE CALEDONIAN.

The Mysterious Woman.

In the memoir of Gov. Briggs we find this anecdote recorded as it was first related by him at a great meeting in Albany. It was subsequently printed in two or three forms by the American Temperance Union and widely circulated with remarkable effect. And though our ministers, deacons and physicians are temperance men, there are some men who advocate granting licenses.

"At a certain town meeting in Pennsylvania the question came up whether any persons should be licensed to sell rum. The clergyman, the deacon, the physician, strange as it may appear, all favored it. One man only spoke against it, because of the mischief it did. The question was about to be put, when all at once there arose from one corner of the room a miserable woman. She was thin and pale, and her appearance indicated the utmost wretchedness, and that her mortal career was almost closed. After a moment's silence, and all eyes being fixed upon her, she stretched her attenuated body to its utmost height, and raising her voice to a shrill pitch, she called all to look upon her.

"Yes," said she, "look upon me and then hear me. All that the last speaker has said relative to temperate drinking as being the bane of drunkenness, is true. All practice, all experience, declares its truth. All drinking of alcohol as a beverage is excess. Look upon me; you all know me, or once did; you all know I was once mistress of the best farm in the town; you all know, too, I had one of the best, the most devoted of husbands; you all know I had fine, noble-hearted, industrious boys. Where are they now? Doctor where are they now? You all know you know they lie in a row, side by side in your church yard, all—every one of them filling the drunkard's grave. They were all taught to believe that temperate drinking was safe; that excesses ought to be avoided; and they never acknowledged excess. They quoted you and me," pointing with her shrivelled finger to the minister, deacon and doctor) as authority.

They thought themselves safe under such teachers. But I saw the gradual change coming over my family and prospects, with dismay and horror. I felt we were all to be overwhelmed in one common ruin. I tried to ward off the blow; I tried to break the spell—the delusive spell—in which the idea of the benefits of temperate drinking had involved my husband and sons. I begged, I prayed, but the odds were against me. The minister sold the poison that was destroying my husband and son; was a good creature of God; the deacon, who sits under the pulpit there, and took our sum to pay him ruin bills, sold them the poison; the doctor said that a little was good, and excess only ought to be avoided. My poor husband and my dear boys fell into the snare, and they could not escape; and one after another were consigned to the sorrowful grave of the drunkard.

The miserable woman vanished. A dead silence pervaded the assembly; the minister, deacon and physician hung their heads, and when the president of the meeting put the question, "Shall any license be granted for the sale of spirituous liquors?" the unanimous response was "No!"

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